

# 13 Contact in the City

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HEIKE WIESE

## Abstract

This chapter looks at cities as vibrant sites of language contact. Urban areas have always been a magnet for immigration, from surrounding areas as well as from more distant regions and other countries, and as a result they have always been characterised by a rich diversity of social groups, (sub-)cultures, and the different languages, dialects, and styles associated with them. The linguistic fluidity and diversity of cities offers a particularly favourable context for new developments, providing a rich pool of linguistic resources and ample opportunities for language contact in individuals as well as speech communities. This makes urban areas a hotbed of code mixing, switching, and linguistic innovation leading to new linguistic practices and the emergence of new varieties.

## 1 Background: an historic view on urban language contact

Throughout history, cities have been a magnet for immigration, taking in a constant influx of new residents, both from more rural areas of the same region or country and from regions and countries further afar, who would bring with them a wealth of different dialects and languages (see Mackey 2005 for an overview). Well-known historic examples for highly multilingual cities include such early cosmopolitan cities as Bombay, Dar es Salaam, Alexandria, or Constantinople, many of which still retain their multicultural and multilingual character today (Gupta 2000). In an account from the early seventeenth century, the English travel writer Thomas Coryat relates that in Venice one could “heare all the languages of Christendome, besides those that are spoken by the barbarous Ethnickes” (Dursteler 2012: 47), and in an often-cited letter from the early eighteenth century, another English author, Lady Mary Wortly Montagu, describes Constantinople – where she lived when her husband was the English ambassador there – as a “Tower of Babel” (O’Quinn and Heffernan eds. 2012: Letter 41).

The large trading cities of the Levant were polyglot and cosmopolitan, with language mixing in the streets and in families as well as in formal contexts (Strauss 2011, Mansel 2014), and cities in the Early Modern Mediterranean in general, including not only the Ottoman, but also the Habsburg and Venetian empires, were characterised by a large cultural and linguistic diversity and fluidity (Dursteler 2012; cf. also Lucassen and Lucassen 2013 on multiethnic empires in Medieval Europe).

The strong dominance of a single national language and the related monolingual perspectives we see in Europe today, are a historically comparably recent phenomenon: a legacy from a period of nation-state building that involved what Bommers and Maas (2005: 182) called the “counterfactual ideological construction” of ‘one country, one people, one language’, which is still very much part of the self-image in most modern European states (cf. Vogl 2012 for an historical overview). In contrast to this, in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, multilingualism was a normal part of life, an unremarkable fact of everyday linguistic

experiences and practices (cf. Putzo 2011). Classen (2013) shows in an analysis of a large range of early texts including, among others, *Beowulf* (between ca. 800 and ca.1100), the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200), and *El Cid* (ca. 1200), that even though there are numerous descriptions of encounters during travels or war that will have involved speakers of different linguistic backgrounds, this never incited any special comments in the stories: multilingualism was so much the norm that at no point, this seems to have been regarded as a challenge.

In urban areas, different local dialects came together with a range of foreign languages, supplemented by Latin as a language of religion and education. In particular in the cities, widespread multilingualism was further supported by the fact that merchants' sons and (male) students usually spent longer periods abroad for training and education. Accordingly, students' argots as predecessors of modern youth languages were often influenced by language contact at least in the form of lexical borrowing (Mihm 2001).

## 2 Contact in modern cities

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:present-day contact"}

The heterogeneous and fluid character of urban speech communities makes them particularly open to language variation and change, and they can accordingly play a pioneering role in linguistic innovation (cf. Vanderkeckhove 2010). According to the UN report on World Urbanisation Prospects, more than half of the world's population lived in urban areas in 2014, with an upward trend (UN 2015), so cities are an increasingly important domain for the investigation of language use in general, and language contact in particular, with urban language putting a spotlight on developments at both sociolinguistic and structural levels.

Traditionally, the linguistic investigation of dialects concentrated on rural areas. The focus was on a group of speakers whom Chambers and Trudgill (1980) described as 'non-mobile old rural males', short NORMs: in order to identify a particularly pronounced, "authentic" dialect, traditional dialectology tended to favour older, male speakers who had spent most of their life in the same rural area. Accordingly, a dialect atlas resulting from such a survey, rather than reflecting the breadth of linguistic practices within different regions, might more fittingly be called an "atlas of old men's village speech". Urban speech communities were less in the centre of attention since they were seen as less likely to provide homogeneous, historically grown dialects, given the high degree of contact and fluidity at social and linguistic levels. However, it is just this dynamic that makes urban centres interesting for investigations of linguistic and social differentiation. Accordingly, modern sociolinguistics has had a strong focus on urban language since Labov's seminal works in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>1</sup> A comparably new line of research into urban multilingualism targets the linguistic landscape, that is, language that is visible in the public domain and can provide insights into local linguistic ecologies and power relations, and (contact-)linguistic practices.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1 Dialect levelling and change

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:dialect levelling and change"}

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Labov (1972). For recent sociolinguistic perspectives on urban language see, e.g., contributions in Heinrich and Smakman (eds. 2018), and Coulmas (2018: Ch.7) for an overview and a discussion of language profiles as a basis of research on urban multilingualism.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., contributions in Shohamy and Gorter (eds. 2009) for an overview; in Blackwood (ed. 2017) for a recent methodological discussion.

Urban language contact often leads to the formation of new dialects. From a general perspective, we can distinguish two main kinds of urban dialects that have been in the focus of contact-linguistic studies: the development of koines as a result of dialect levelling based on different regional dialects, and the emergence of new versions of existing local dialects under the influence of other languages or dialects. From the perspective of language contact, koines represent the formation of a new mixed variety and can hence be regarded as a counterpart to new contact languages such as pidgins and creoles, and Mixed Languages. In contrast, the second kind of dialect reflects developments within an existing variety that were triggered or facilitated by language contact.

An example for the first case has been described by Kerswill (2002) for Milton Keynes, a ‘New Town’ in the UK that was founded only some decades earlier. Internal immigration supported here a koineisation based on contact between the region’s original dialect and several other dialects brought in by new residents from other regions (cf. also Kerswill, this volume).<sup>3</sup> An example for the second kind of dialect change has been described by Wölck (2002) for New York State, where immigration from Germany, Italy, and Poland supported new linguistic developments not just in minority, heritage language use, but also in the majority language of the receiving country, that is, English.

## 2.2 New urban contact dialects

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:new contact dialects"}

Over the last decades, a major focus of research on urban language contact has been on new ways of speaking that emerged as peer-group vernaculars among adolescents in multiethnic urban neighbourhoods. Following Wiese (to appear), such new ways of speaking can be captured as *urban contact dialects*, defined as “urban vernaculars that emerged in contexts of migration-based linguistic diversity among locally born young people, marking their speakers as belonging to a multiethnic peer group”. While such contact dialects can be observed in different cities across the world, two geographical areas have been particularly in the centre of interest lately: Northwestern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.2.1 The linguistic dynamics of multiethnic urban youth

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:multiethnic urban youth"}

An important sociolinguistic characteristic of urban contact dialects is their association with multiethnic neighbourhoods, where “ethnicity” should be understood as a social category, constructing groups that are believed to share a common descent – typically geographically associated – and culture (e.g., Moran 2014; Fought 2002). These dialects typically emerge among young people who grow up in a mixed urban neighbourhood where a substantial part of the older generation (e.g., speakers’ parents or grandparents) have immigrated to the city from rural areas and/or other countries. These locally born speakers, then, find themselves as part of a new, multiethnic urban generation that has access to a wealth of different dialects and languages as part of the broader cultural heritage in their peer group.

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<sup>3</sup> For similar developments in another geographical region, cf. Miller (2004) on historic and present examples of dialect levelling in Arabic cities.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of recent research, cf., e.g., such collected volumes as Quist and Svendsen eds. (2010), Källström and Lindberg eds. (2011), Kern and Selting eds. (2011), Nortier and Svendsen eds. (2015) for Europe; Hurst ed. (2014); Nassenstein and Hollington eds. (2015); Mensah ed. (2016) for Africa; Kerswill and Wiese eds. (*in preparation*) for an integration.

This large range – sometimes described as “superdiversity”<sup>5</sup> – supports the creative combination and integration of a multitude of linguistic resources, in linguistic practices captured, e.g., by such concepts as “translanguaging” (cf. García 2009). Over time, such practices can lead to new contact dialects as markers of a new, multiethnic urban generation. Findings on the distribution of these dialects so far suggest that they tend to emerge first in peer-group situations among young people, and can later spread to other age groups, becoming more general markers of social class, multiethnicity, or urbanness, cf. Wiese (to appear) for an overview.

That these dialects have their roots in youth language practices is not surprising from the perspective of language variation and change. Young adolescent speakers are often regarded as the main agents of change since they are a social group that is forging new identities for themselves and strongly orients towards peers. Accordingly, Kerswill (1996) and Eckert (2000) identify adolescents as a core group in linguistic innovation, and Tagliamonte and d’Arcy (2009) discuss converging quantitative data that points to an “adolescent peak” in the usage of new phenomena, which might be a requirement for language change (cf. also Labov 2001).

In both Africa and Europe, urban youth is a particularly vital sector of society. Africa shows not only a high increase of urbanisation, but also the highest level of population growth globally, and young people make up a large proportion of the population, with 60% of the population being under 25 years (UN 2015). While Europe, in sharp contrast to Africa, faces population declines and is challenged by an aging population in general (UN 2015), this is not true for its urban population with a migrant background, which make up a substantial part of the speech community for urban contact dialects: this community is vital and grows faster than the rest – for instance, in Germany, the average age of the overall population is 45.3 years, but the population with migration background shows an average age of only 35.4 years, and over a third of children under 10 years have a migration background.<sup>6</sup> According to the 2017 Census, in cities over 50,000 inhabitants, nearly half of young residents under 18 years (48%) were from a family with an immigration history.

As mentioned above, cities in general are a particularly vibrant site of language contact, supported by a large influx of new residents. In present-day Europe, this is primarily due to political and labour immigration from other countries, while in Africa, domestic immigration from other, more rural parts plays an important role as well. As the historic examples of students’ language mentioned has already shown, urban youth language as a rule participates in such language contact, thus bringing together two sources of dynamics, which makes them particularly interesting, providing a domain where, as Nortier and Dorleijn (2013) put it, “language contact can be caught, as it were, ‘red handed’”.

### **2.2.2 Multilingual mixed languages vs. new majority language vernaculars**

The multiethnolectal urban contact dialects that can emerge under such favourable conditions, can take on two different forms: they can constitute Multilingual Mixed

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<sup>5</sup> E.g., Vertovec (2007), Blommaert et al. eds. (2011); for criticism of this concept, see Pavlenko (2018).

<sup>6</sup> The Federal Statistical Office in Germany defines “migration background” as covering persons who immigrated to Germany after 1949, have a foreign nationality and/or have at least one parent for whom that holds.

Languages that integrate different contact languages, or new vernaculars of a majority language of the larger society. This two-fold distinction of contact-linguistic codes is related to the sociolinguistic make-up of the larger societal context, underlining the relevance of such factors for the outcome of language contact.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of widespread societal multilingualism, multilingual practices such as code switching and mixing are a normal part of everyday encounters. In such contexts, urban contact dialects often take on the form of *Mixed Languages* in the sense of Thomason (2001). According to the contact-linguistic taxonomy developed there, Mixed Languages combine grammatical and lexical subsystems from two source languages, thus indicating a mixed ancestry (cf. also Matras 2009: Ch.10.3; Meakins 2013; Velupillai 2015: Ch.3; Bakker, this volume). In the core type of “intertwined” Mixed Languages, grammatical features dominantly go back to one language, while the lexicon is largely contributed by a second language. Urban contact dialects with their much larger range of contact languages as potential sources typically draw on more than two contact languages, especially for their lexicon, making them a special kind of “Multilingual Mixed Language” (cf. Wiese, to appear).

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:urban contact dialects"}Examples for urban contact dialects that have the form of Multilingual Mixed Languages are found, e.g., in many African countries today, where linguistic developments can benefit from the larger context of societal multilingualism and a long tradition of embracing the normality of multilingual practices (cf. Mufwene 2008: Ch.13 on multilingualism in African history). (1) illustrates this type of contact-linguistic code with an example from Camfranglais, an urban contact dialect from Cameroon (Kießling and Mous 2004): in this example, a grammatical frame provided by {xe "language contact:urban scenarios:urban contact dialects:Cameroonian French"}Cameroonian French integrates lexical borrowings from two contact languages, ‘kick’ from English and ‘agogo’ from Hausa.

- (1) On a kick mon agogo.  
GENERIC.PRON.3PS. has steal my watch  
 ‘They stole my watch / Someone has stolen my watch.’

Historically, there is also an example from Europe for an urban contact dialect that takes on the form of a Mixed Language, namely {xe "language contact:urban scenarios:urban contact dialects:Old Helsinki Slang"}Old Helsinki Slang. This dialect emerged in early twentieth century Helsinki, when monolingual national ideologies were still restricted to the upper classes. Like modern examples, Old Helsinki Slang is associated with the formation of a new, mixed urban group; in this case a bilingual working class culture that emerged as the result of Finnish-speaking immigrants mixing with the initially predominantly Swedish-speaking local population. Structurally, this new dialect resembled modern African examples, showing such characteristic patterns of language mixing as a Finnish morphosyntactic frame combined with a dominantly Swedish lexicon (cf. de Smit 2010).

In contrast to this, in present-day Europe, a societal macro context that is characterised by a strong monolingual habitus (e.g., Hüning et al. 2012) supports urban contact dialects that constitute new vernaculars of the majority language. In modern European nation states, we typically find a strong ideological association tying language to space, where a single language is constructed as belonging to a distinctive geographical

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. also Lim and Ansaldo (2016: Ch.8) on the relevance of sociolinguistic aspects for contact-linguistic dynamics in general.

region (often the country as a whole, or, in the case of multilingual European states, a delimited region within a country). This language constitutes a strong majority language whose dominance is further supported through such institutions as education, bureaucracy, or the legal system.

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:urban contact dialects:status of monolingualism"}This widespread monolingual habitus in modern Europe is at odds with the local reality of urban settings, where multilingualism is an unremarkable everyday reality, in many ways reminiscent of the multilingual normality of earlier periods (see section 0 above). In these urban settings, many speakers grow up with one or more heritage language(s) in addition to the majority language, and children and adolescents from mono- and multilingual homes alike typically acquire at least some words or short routines from other languages spoken in their peers' families, leading to a horizontal multilingualism that is in evident contrast to the 'one language – one country' ideology that dominates the societal macro context.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, this macro context is powerful enough to preserve the national language's dominance even in multilingual local settings, given that this language is not only the language of educational (and other) institutions, but also typically functions as a widespread lingua franca, among multilingual speakers with different repertoires as well as monolingual majority language speakers. Under such conditions, then, urban contact dialects, rather than constituting Mixed Languages, form new vernaculars of the majority language. Such new vernaculars do not even-handedly integrate two or more contact languages, but remain close to this single, dominant majority language, with contact-linguistic transfer mostly restricted to a number of lexical items and short routines from heritage languages. Structural transfer is rare: rather than genuine *contact-induced* change, what we most often find at the grammatical level is variation and change that takes up internal tendencies of the majority language. Accordingly, crosslinguistically one can find similar developments in countries with related majority languages, even though the contact-linguistic settings are characterised by typologically different heritage languages. Developments get a special boost in the dynamic setting of extensive language contact, but they reflect, to a large part, majority language patterns.

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:urban contact dialects:verb third word order in continental Germanic languages"}An example are "verb-third" (V3) word order options that have been observed in urban contact dialects across countries with related Germanic majority languages, namely Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway, but in the context of such typologically diverse heritage languages as, e.g., Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, Greek, and Serbian or Croatian (cf. Wiese 2009). The Germanic languages on which these contact dialects are based are usually described as 'verb-second' (V2), capturing a pattern that puts the finite verb in second position in main declaratives (and some other sentence types), with another major sentence constituent in front of the verb; this can be the subject, but also, e.g., an object or an adverbial. For urban contact dialects of such Germanic languages, findings from different studies point to additional V3 options, where two constituents rather than one can be placed before the finite verb (see 0 below for a further discussion of V3). (2) through (4) give three examples, from Denmark, Germany, and Norway (data from Quist 2000, Wiese 2013, and Freywald et al. 2015, respectively).

(2) Normalt man går på ungdomsskolen. [Danish]  
*usually one goes to supplementary school*

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. also Quist (2010) on untying the 'language-body-place connection' for the example of a Copenhagen school setting.

‘Usually one goes to the supplementary school.’

(3) danach isch muss zu mein vater [German; from KiDKo/MuH28MK<sup>9</sup>]  
*afterwards I must to my father*  
‘Afterwards, I’ll have to go to my father.’

(4) Nå de får betale. [Norwegian]  
*now they get/must pay*  
‘Now, they must pay.’

The fact that such similar V3 patterns can be observed across contact settings suggests that these patterns relate to internal options of the Germanic V2 languages involved here, rather than to transfer from other languages. This kind of contact-linguistic dynamics can be described as “contact-facilitated” variation and change: it is contact-related in the sense of being supported by a dynamic linguistic setting that generally favours language variation and change, but it is not contact-*induced* in that it does not involve specific patterns of another language (Wiese, to appear). We can hence distinguish two kinds of contact-related dynamics for urban contact dialects: contact-induced versus contact-facilitated variation and change.

Contact-facilitated patterns occur particularly often in urban contact dialects that represent {xe "language contact:urban scenarios:urban contact dialects:new vernaculars of a majority language"}new vernaculars of a majority language. The local setting with its large diversity of multilingual practices supports a higher tolerance of linguistic variation, allowing a more liberal linguistic system. Given a dominant monolingual habitus within the larger societal context, this might not lead to the emergence of new mixed varieties, but such a loosening of grammatical restrictions can still give these new urban dialects an innovative potential that makes them pioneers within the general dialectal landscape of the majority language (Wiese 2013; cf. also Hinskens 2011 on the special dynamics of new urban contact dialects compared to historically older ones; Matras 2011 on innovations and elaborations in contexts of widespread bilingualism and laxer normative control).

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:contact-induced and contact-facilitated variation and change"}Contact-induced and contact-facilitated variation and change for a particular urban contact dialect can cover a wide spectrum, with gradual rather than categorical differences. At one end, we find direct transfers of specific elements or patterns from another language, at the other end, phenomena that are shared with other, more monolingually based varieties, but might not be as far developed there. We will tease this apart in a case study from Germany, in Section 0, where we take a closer look at V3 and some other pertinent examples.

### 2.3 Metrolinguism and market jargons

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:metrolingualism"}{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:metrolingualism"}

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<sup>9</sup> KiDKo (“**K**iez**D**eutsch-**K**orpus”) is an annotated corpus with data from spontaneous conversations among adolescents in Berlin, Germany. The main subcorpus, KiDKo/*Mu*, is from a multilingual and multiethnic neighbourhood; in addition, there is a complementary subcorpus, KiDKo/*Mo*, which provides comparable data from a more monolingually German setting. The first two letters in speaker codes identify the subcorpus (*Mu* or *Mo*), the last letter identifies speakers’ family language repertoires (additional family/heritage language for bilingual speakers: e.g., *K*-Kurdish, *T*-Turkish, *A*-Arabic, or only German for monolingual speakers: *D*). The corpus (including also some other subcorpora) is freely accessible at [www.kiezdeutschkorpus.de](http://www.kiezdeutschkorpus.de).

An interesting setting of particularly intense contact and a high degree of linguistic fluidity are urban markets or bazaars, which have lately attracted more and more attention from linguistic studies. In such linguistically rich settings, sellers and customers act as multicompetent speakers (cf. Matras 2013) accessing a diverse pool of linguistic resources in their market interactions that allows them to creatively add new elements to their repertoire.

Accordingly, contact usually does not so much lead to new dialects, but to less stable, highly fluid practices of linguistic mixing and integration. Such settings have been in the focus of sociolinguistic approaches to “metrolingualism” (cf. Pennycook and Otsuji 2015), targeting spatial repertoires that are determined by linguistically highly diverse local contexts (a bazaar, but also, e.g., a restaurant or a shop) and challenge traditional concepts like code-switching or code-mixing.

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:urban contact dialects:status as jargons"}From a contact-linguistic point of view, such multilingual practices could be seen as something like the “jargons” described in creole studies; cf. Vellupilai (2015: 534), who defines this as “individual *ad hoc* solutions in individual contact situations leading to a highly variable and unstable contact language”. If taken literally, there is no such thing as a jargon, then, since these solutions will differ from speaker to speaker and emerge differently in each communicative situation. However, as we will see below for the example of two urban markets in Berlin, one can often find some recurring patterns in these settings, and perhaps the best way to think of an urban market’s jargon is as an integrative linguistic practice characterised by (a) access to a spatially determined, but principally open range of linguistic resources and (b) a liberal use of individual *ad hoc* solutions, but at the same time (c) guided by local customs of language choice and language dominance and (d) centering around a shared core of recurring patterns.

### 3 A case in point: language contact in Berlin

In our third and last section, let us have a look at the city of Berlin. Even though Germany’s largest city by some margin, with a bit over 3.6 million inhabitants (2019) Berlin is not exactly huge in international terms. However, as a vibrant urban metropole, it offers a broad range of language contact settings that allow us to explore and illustrate some of the different facets of urban language contact we discussed in the first two sections.

#### 3.1 Language contact in the traditional Berlin dialect

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:language contact in Berlin"}

Berlin has always been a site of language and dialect contact, right from the start, with the two thirteenth century towns Berlin and Cölln – the predecessors of present-day Berlin – based on the immigration of Low German and Dutch speakers from the lower Rhine region to an area further characterised by a Slavic language, Sorbian, especially in rural settlements (cf. Butz 1988). Today, Sorbian is a protected minority language in Germany, spoken, e.g., in some of the Spreewald region south of Berlin in the state of Brandenburg.

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect"}As typical for urban areas, immigration-based dialect contact led to dialect levelling in Berlin. Initially, the spoken language was Low German, and writing was in Latin. In North German cities including Berlin, Low German was later used as a written language as well, complementing Latin. However, in the fifteenth/sixteenth century, writing was conducted more and more in High German, and in the seventeenth/eighteenth century, spoken and written French



gained in importance as an additional contact language, fashionable through language practices of the nobility. This was further boosted by French-speaking Huguenots, and similarly, other languages also gained through immigration, e.g., Yiddish. Further immigration adding to the city's linguistic diversity came from low-German speaking rural areas, with large numbers of immigrants, for instance in the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), and, in the nineteenth century, as a result of industrialisation which led to an immense growth of the city and to a linguistic setting characterised by intense dialect and language contact.<sup>10</sup>

This kind of setting supported an urban dialect whose High German character reflects broad dialect levelling, but which also integrates lexical transfers from a range of contact languages, as well as retaining some remnants of its initially Low German basis. For instance, *Bulette* 'meat ball', referring to a staple of traditional Berlin cuisine, goes back to French 'boulette', the particle *dalli* 'quick/snappy' has a Slavic origin (> Polish *dalej*), and the verb *zocken* came in via Yiddish, meaning 'to play', 'to play cards'. As a colloquial term, *zocken* used to be associated primarily with gambling, but has meanwhile gained additional currency among young people, who use it to refer to electronic games (while the morphologically related, prefixed *abzocken* is a colloquial term meaning 'to rip off / screw someone'). A Low German influence is visible, e.g., morphologically in deviations from the High German accusative-dative distinction, or phonologically by the use of [t] instead of [s] in some lexical items, e.g., *wat* instead of *was* 'what'. {xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:features"}

The twentieth century saw separate developments in East and West Berlin after their partition through the Berlin wall. This social and linguistic segregation led to differences that were still noticeable a decade after the wall came down in the late 1990s, especially in domains of lexicon and phonology (cf., for instance, Dittmar and Bredel 1999).

In East Berlin, during the period of the German Democratic Republic (1949-1990), state contract workers, e.g., from North Vietnam, lived in separate boarding houses, and informal interactions with the local German-speaking population were not encouraged, hence this did not have a noticeable contact-linguistic effect on the Berlin dialect.

West Berlin participated in the intake of large labour immigration since the {xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:immigration into Berlin"}1960s, and these immigrants contributed to a vibrant contact-linguistic setting. This was particularly true for traditional working class neighbourhoods, e.g., Wedding and Neukölln, and in areas that had become particularly disadvantaged through the Wall, e.g. parts of Kreuzberg that were cut off on three sides from surrounding areas. Today, these neighbourhoods (and similarly multilingual inner-city neighbourhoods in other German cities) support an urban contact dialect of the kind we discussed in 0, namely "Kiezdeutsch", lit. '(neighbour-)hood German', a new German vernacular.

Since the 1990s, immigration from Eastern Europe and increased domestic immigration (in particular from South Germany) further contributed to the linguistic melting pot of Berlin as a whole, as did the influx of international companies and institutions and their workforce and of refugees forced into emigration by political and economic crises in the Middle East and the 'Global South'.

Ironically, today we can observe some ethnic and social linguistic stratification where only the older urban dialect is constructed as authentic local language use, indexical for an imagined monolingual German in-group of genuine, ethnically homogeneous "Berliners" – even though this dialect has always been contact-based, with

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<sup>10</sup> For an historic overview, cf. Schildt and Schmidt eds. (1992).

a mixed, immigration-borne speech community. In contrast to this, a new urban dialect like Kiezdeutsch is often perceived as alien to the local linguistic landscape and a potential threat to it, and its speakers, even though they are typically at least second-generation Germans, are excluded from this in-group.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2 Contact-related variation and change in Kiezdeutsch

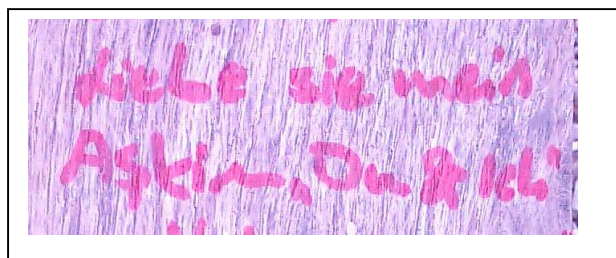
{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:Kiezdeutsch"}

Kiezdeutsch is an instance of the second kind of contact-linguistic code we discussed earlier, namely a new vernacular of the majority language (= in this case, of German) – which is not surprising given the strong monolingual habitus we find in present-day Germany, and the accordingly strong dominance of German as a majority language (cf. Gogolin 2002, Wiese 2015). Kiezdeutsch hence provides us with a good showcase for teasing apart contact-induced transfer and contact-facilitated internal dynamics, two kinds of contact-related language variation and change we distinguished for such urban contact dialects in 0. As mentioned there, this distinction is not categorical, but gradual, and we can often observe both kinds of dynamics at work. In the present section, let us have a look at some clear-cut examples as well as a number of in-between cases for Kiezdeutsch. For the purpose of this illustration, we will concentrate on phenomena where Turkish might play a role as a source language.

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:Kiezdeutsch:features"} A clear case of *direct* influence is lexical transfer. In the context of urban contact dialects, such transfer leads to integrations at grammatical, and sometimes also graphemic levels, and new elements can be used across speakers, independent of linguistic backgrounds.

Figure 1 gives an illustration:<sup>12</sup> this is from a message on a playground in Berlin celebrating the love between *Ingo + Inga*. In this message, the writer (presumably Ingo) uses a number of Turkish loan words within a German text. One of them, rendered in

Figure 1, is *Aşkim* ‘my love’, as part of a passage ‘Liebe sie mein Aşkim, Du and Ich!’, lit. ‘Love her my Aşkim, you and I!’ The Turkish source, ‘aşkım’, is a morphologically complex item consisting of a nominal base ‘aşk’ and a 1SG possessive suffix ‘-ım’. In the Kiezdeutsch example, ‘Aşkim’ is combined with the German first person possessive pronoun *mein* ‘my’, which suggests that it is treated as a mono-morphemic noun, that is, its integration into German has led to an erasure of the internal Turkish structure. Graphemic integration is visible in two aspects: the replacement of Turkish ‘ı’, which is not a grapheme in German, by ‘i’, which is; and the capitalisation of *Aşkim* in accordance with German spelling rules for nouns. Note, though, that the Turkish “ş”, which is not a grapheme in German either, is preserved, indicating that the integration is not categorical.



<sup>11</sup> See also Wiese (2015). For similar patterns in other European countries, cf., e.g., Kerswill (2014) on concerns in the public debate in the UK that Multicultural London English might replace traditional Cockney.

<sup>12</sup> from KiDKo/LL: “From the ‘hood’ with love”, a linguistic-landscape subcorpus of KiDKo (see also fn.9 above), accessible via [www.kiezdeutschkorporus.de](http://www.kiezdeutschkorporus.de).

Figure 1: Lexical integration in a love message (Berlin-Kreuzberg)

An example for the transfer of a pattern above the level of individual words is the *m*-reduplication described for Kiezdeutsch,<sup>13</sup> cf. (5):

- (5) er sagt zu m=meiner cousine so fettsack METTsack [KiDKo, MuH27WT]  
*he says to m=my cousin MP fatbag matbag*  
 'He says, like, "Fatso, Matso!" to my cousin.'

In Turkish, *m*-reduplication is well established in spoken language, it is syntactically fully integrated and can be used with bases of different syntactic categories (e.g., Stolz 2008). At the semantic/pragmatic level, it expresses vagueness and can also have pejorative effects. In German, *m*-reduplication seems to be a novel phenomenon, so far restricted to the multilingual contexts characteristic of Kiezdeutsch. In these contexts, though, it is not simply taken over as is, but develops its own dynamics and acquires language-specific characteristics. Syntactically, *m*-reduplication seems to be less flexible and largely (although not exclusively) restricted to nominal bases in German. Phonological integration into German is achieved by replacing the whole onset by [m] (while in Turkish, only the first consonant is replaced). Pragmatically, Kiezdeutsch adds a youth language aspect to the construction: by using *m*-reduplication, speakers present themselves as 'cool' or 'chilled'.<sup>14</sup> Hence, this is an example for contact-induced change since contact triggers the development of a new pattern, however, one that takes on a life of its own when it is integrated into the receiving language.

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:features:parallels to heritage languages"}A further step in the direction of internal change can be seen in developments that have parallels in a heritage language, but also a clear internal motivation from within the grammatical system of the majority language. A candidate for such a two-fold source in Kiezdeutsch is the use of *gib(t)s* lit. 'gives.it' as an existential particle, cf. (6):

- (6) WEIßte doch, die die in verschiedene FARben gibts? [KiDKo, MuH9WT]  
*know you<sub>CL</sub> PART those that<sub>PL</sub> in different colours gibts*  
 'You know them – those that come in different colours?'

The form "gib(t)s" derives from existential "gibt es" lit. 'gives it'. In the original pattern, a 3SG verb "gibt" is combined with an expletive pronominal subject "es" and an accusative object for the Theme, i.e., "Es gibt NP<sub>ACC</sub>", with a meaning similar to English "There is NP". In spoken language, "es" is cliticised, yielding "gibts" or phonologically reduced "gibs" when we have the order "gibt es". This is in accordance with a general rule in German that pronouns in that position (after the finite verb) are cliticised, which frequently happens in main declaratives with a sentence-initial adverbial. This generally yields "gibs" in such sentences as, e.g., "Hier gibts ...", lit. 'Here gives-it ...' ("Here, there are ..."). However, this rule cannot capture the novel use of "gibs" in subordinate sentences requiring SOV order, as in (6). And there is some evidence for the Kiezdeutsch construction moving even further away from standard German, with the Theme NP as a subject rather than an accusative object (cf. Wiese 2013). This suggests that "gibs" is treated as a mono-

<sup>13</sup> Wiese (2013); Wiese and Polat (2016); cf. also Şimşek (2012: Ch.4.2) on examples for *m*-reduplication in German-Turkish language contact.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Wiese and Polat (2016) for a detailed analysis of the conceptual domains and pragmatic networks involved here.

morphemic form, making the subject position vacant, which can then be appropriated by the Theme.

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:features:derivations from Turkish"} Unlike standard German, Turkish possesses a construction like this, based on the existential particle "var" (negated "yok"), which thus makes a plausible source for this use of "gibs" in Kiezdeutsch. However, a closer look at German shows that the new use of "gibs" gets also a solid motivation from within, since the conventional pattern sits rather uneasily in the general layout of the syntax-semantics interface. With the expletive subject "es" it contains a syntactic argument that does not have a semantic counterpart, and – related to this – the highest thematic role (the Theme) does not correspond to the subject, as it normally should, but to the object. Seen from this point, the development in Kiezdeutsch can be motivated by syntax-semantics alignment: mono-morphematisation of "gibs" gets rid of the semantically empty element "es", and reinterpretation of the accusative as a nominative allows an association of the highest thematic role with the subject.

Such a regularisation can draw on two lines of support within German (cf. Wiese 2013 for a discussion). For one, there is a general tendency in spoken German towards a univerbation of existential *gibt es* to *gib(t)s*, based on frequent cliticisation. Second, in modern German, accusative and nominative forms are often identical at the surface, which provides a basis for reinterpretation (e.g., in (6) above, the expression for the Theme, third person singular feminine *die*, could be nominative as well as accusative). This suggests a strong internal appeal for the development of *gibs*. This German-internal motivation is further supported by such evidence as in (7), which comes from German in Namibia (Wiese et al. 2014):

- (7) da gibts auch n berühmter SÄNger hier in namibia  
there gibts also a<sub>cl</sub> famous singer here in Namibia  
'There is also a famous singer here in Namibia.'

This data is from informal conversations in a speech community where German is spoken as a first language and is also embedded in a multilingual context. Unlike in Germany, Turkish does not play a significant role here. Nevertheless, we do find the *gibs* construction and, since the expression for the Theme (*n berühmter SÄnger*) is a masculine singular, this is one of the cases where we can even identify a distinct nominative. This suggests that the motivation from within the grammatical system of German is a crucial force behind the development, pointing to a primarily contact-*facilitated*, rather than contact-induced pattern. At the same time, this does not rule out that the Turkish existential construction gives the development of *gibs* an additional boost in Kiezdeutsch in Germany, especially since Turkish competences are widespread in its community.

An example that is even further towards the end of the scale where internal trends are dominant (rather than influences of specific contact languages), is the V3 word order in main declaratives that we discussed in Section 0, that is, the option to place two constituents, rather than just one, before the finite verb. As argued above, the fact that there is converging evidence for this option from a range of Germanic "verb-second" languages, points to an internal motivation. At the surface, this pattern shows some similarity with SVO orders known from early stages of language acquisition, and some earlier accounts from Germany who associated it primarily with young speakers of a Turkish heritage background described it as a transformation of V2 to SVO (e.g., Auer 2003). However, subsequent studies have revealed structural features that indicate the integration of this pattern into the topology of German sentences (including sentential

brackets that delineate the so-called “forefield” in the left periphery and the “middle field” following it).<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, cross-linguistic evidence points to a general information-structural motivation for the pattern: V3 options allow speakers to place both framesetters and topics in the left periphery, a linearisation that might reflect general, language-independent preferences for ordering information.<sup>16</sup> In Kiezdeutsch contexts, {xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:features:learner SVO"}learner SVO can be found, e.g., in the German of the original immigrants, often the parents or grandparents of some of the speakers, and speakers will hence be familiar with it. Accordingly, its surface similarity might add a further source, but this presumably plays a minor role in the development of V3.

Further support for this comes from V3 evidence in more monolingual contexts of present-day German (Wiese 2013; Wiese and Müller 2018). In these contexts, V3 is not, as traditional wisdom has it, ruled out by a strict V2 constraint, but can in fact be observed in informal speech, where it follows the same pattern found for Kiezdeutsch contexts, but might be quantitatively less frequent (Wiese and Rehbein 2015). This is hence a case where the multilingual context of Kiezdeutsch does not so much provide a novel grammatical blueprint, but rather contributes to the general linguistic dynamics, giving urban contact dialects a quantitative advantage over language use from more monolingual settings.

Such outcomes are characteristic of urban contact dialects like Kiezdeutsch that take the form of new majority language vernaculars under the pressure of a monolingual societal habitus. However, even under such societal conditions, we also find urban settings of such intense contact that practices of substantial language mixing are the rule rather than an exception. A prime example for such settings are urban markets, where speakers can integrate elements from a rich pool of linguistic resources. For an illustration, let us now have a look at two such markets in Berlin.

### 3.3 Two urban markets as sites of intense language contact

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:urban markets and contact"}

Urban markets with their rich pool of diverse linguistic resources have been in the focus of approaches to “metrolingual practices” (see Section 0 above) investigating the specific spatial repertoires that emerge at such places. Two examples from (socio-)linguistically different parts of Berlin are the Maybachufer market in Berlin-Neukölln and the Dong Xuan Center in Berlin-Lichtenberg. The Maybachufer market, also known as the “Turkish market”, is a street market in a vibrant multiethnic and multilingual neighbourhood, with a linguistic ecology that includes Kiezdeutsch and the traditional Berlin dialect as well as heritage varieties of Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, and a large range of other languages and dialects. The Dong Xuan Center, on the other hand, is set in the more monolingually German neighbourhood of Berlin-Lichtenberg. The centre is a covered wholesale and retail market founded by a Vietnamese immigrant who had initially come to East Berlin as a contract worker during DDR times.

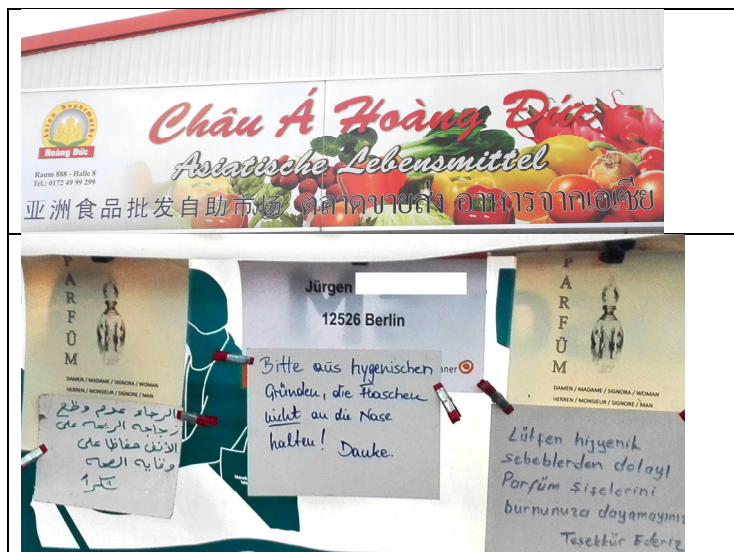
In terms of products, stall owners’ backgrounds, and customer focus, the Maybachufer market has a more middle-Eastern and Mediterranean orientation, compared to the Dong Xuan Center’s more East-Asian character. However, both markets

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<sup>15</sup> E.g., Wiese (2013), te Velde (2017); cf. also Kern and Selting (2009) for deviations from V2 in bilingual (Turkish-German) settings.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Wiese (2011; 2013) for Kiezdeutsch; Freywald et al. (2015) for a cross-linguistic confirmation (from urban contact dialects based on Germanic majority languages); Walkden (2017) for a diachronic perspective.

cater to multi- and monolingual locals, broader immigrant communities, and tourists alike, and both support a rich contact-linguistic setting. While German is still a frequently used lingua franca in interethnic encounters among locals, it is complemented by Turkish or Vietnamese as a salient market language on the Maybachufer and Dong Xuan market, respectively; by English as a global language (e.g., in encounters with tourists), plus a range of other languages, including heritage languages of stall owners (some of them first-generation immigrants) and a range of additional languages used by different groups of customers; which all form part of the markets' linguistic ecologies and can enter speakers' repertoires. In this setting, German does not exert its usually overwhelming dominance as a majority language anymore, but is integrated into a more diverse setting, as reflected, e.g., by an abundance of multilingual signs. The photos in Figure 2 illustrate these typologically different, but similarly diverse linguistic landscapes of the two markets.



{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:linguistic landscape"}

Figure 2: Multilingual (and multi-script) signs at Dong Xuan and Maybachufer markets

The sign on the top is by a Vietnamese-background shop owner in a Dong Xuan market hall and brings together four languages and their respective scripts, namely Vietnamese (on top, “Asia Hoàng Đức – identifying the owner’s name), German (below, “Asian groceries”), Mandarin (bottom left, “Asian food wholesale self-service market”) and Thai (bottom right, “Asian food wholesale market”). The signs on the bottom are from a Maybachufer perfume stall owned by a seller of monolingual German background, who asks customers not to put bottles directly to their noses, using handwritten signs in three languages, Arabic, German, and Turkish, together with printed signs informing customers that perfumes are for women and men, in German, French, Italian, and English. Note that in both cases, German is part of the linguistic selection, but unlike, e.g., on multilingual official signs in Berlin, it is not distinguished by a prominent top or left-most position, a larger font size, etc.

As the following transcript from communications at a vegetable stall on Maybachufer illustrates, such a setting favours a creative integration of linguistic resources. The seller is a first-generation immigrant from Turkey with Turkish and Kurdish as his heritage languages, the customer speaking here is a local with a monolingually German background. Turkish elements are marked by bold script, English

ones by underlining, and Kurdish ones are in small caps. <sup>17</sup>{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:features of Turkish and Kurdish speakers"}

- (8) seller (to passers-by): **Karpuz!** Melone, Gurken!  
*water.melon melon cucumbers*
- (to Italian tourist): One Stück – fünfzig Cent. Fifty Cent.  
*one cl fifty cent fifty cent*
- customer (to seller): **iki tane** Aubergine, bitte.  
*two cl eggplant please*
- seller (to colleague): **BADINCAN!**  
*eggplant*
- (to customer): **Bittschön**, zwei Auberginen. Alles? – Ein Öro.  
*please two eggplants everything one euro*

In this communication, both seller and customer spontaneously integrate elements from a range of languages in their utterances. As discussed in 0 above, such multilingual practices could be characterised as a contact-linguistic “jargon”. On the Maybachufer market, this jargon includes some recurring patterns, such as the frequent use of numeral classifiers (*Stück, tane*), similar to what we would find in Turkish, and the absence of plural marking for measure nouns (*Cent*), which is in accordance with both German and Turkish grammar, while English would require plural forms (e.g., for the example in (8), it would be *fifty cents*, not *cent*). Some recurring lexical characteristics of this market jargon are sellers’ use of *Madame* as a term of address, which often serves as an attention-getting device towards (female) customers, thus closing a lexical-pragmatic gap in standard German, which is currently lacking a term conventionally used for this. – The traditional Berlin dialect has “junge Frau”, lit. ‘young woman’, for such cases, with a counterpart *junger Mann*, lit. ‘young man’ (since this is used independently of the addressee’s age, it often causes irritation if used towards non-locals).

Other recurring characteristics of the market jargon are some phonetic/phonological modifications of German words, in particular [ʔøro] (transcribed as *Öro* in (8)) for *Euro* (standard German [ʔɔi̯ro]), and recurring *bittschön* ‘please’ / ‘here you are’ as a variant of standard German *bitteschön*.

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:features:semantic innovation"}A semantic innovation on a Turkish basis is the use of *çitir*, illustrated on the market sign in

Figure 3: this sign advertises cucumber (German *Gurke*) as ‘crunchy’, using an adjective *çitir* in an interesting combination: in standard Turkish, *çitir* would not be applied to vegetables, but rather to flat dry foods (e.g, potato crisps), whereas vegetables would be characterised with *kütür*.



<sup>17</sup> From Maybachufer fieldnotes (H. Wiese); ‘cl’ – numeral classifier.

Figure 3: Crunchy cucumbers: use of *çitir* on the Maybachufer market

If such noncanonical patterns stabilise and get further established within the market's linguistic practices, they might eventually form the basis of a shared, spatially-bound market grammar; in the words of a Turkish-German seller at a Maybachufer mocca stall:

- (9) "One also learns a lot of languages in addition, after all, from customers, neighbours at the other stalls; sometimes just a few words, for instance, 'uno, dos, tres', but one creates one's own grammar then."<sup>18</sup>

{xe "language contact:urban scenarios:Berlin dialect:creative exploitation of resources"}The creative integration and further development of different linguistic resources we can thus observe on urban markets brings back some multilingual normality to European cities: a linguistic ecology where language contact is embraced as an enrichment rather than a challenge, and the engagement with diverse linguistic resources is accepted as a normal and positive condition of human communication.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, we have encountered cities as sites of rich language contact, characterised by a pronounced social and linguistic fluidity, a constant intake of new speakers and speaker groups, and the wealth of linguistic resources and multilingual competences that comes with this. From a contact-linguistic point of view, we distinguished two kinds of new linguistic forms that often emerge in such settings: new mixed varieties and new versions of existing ones.

Instances of the first kind have been described for scenarios of dialect levelling, where koines emerge as new mixed dialects. These new varieties draw on a range of different regional dialects contributed by new arrivals to the city, including from the surrounding countryside. Other instances we discussed are Multilingual Mixed Languages, which draw on linguistically more distant varieties and languages. The local linguistic ecology that supports Multilingual Mixed Languages are multiethnic urban neighbourhoods characterised by a range of heritage languages as a result of immigration. Their primary speaker base are not the immigrants themselves, but locally-born young people, often descendants of immigrants, who grow up in such neighbourhoods and forge a new, urban multiethnic identity. Such languages typically emerge in urban areas under the umbrella of a societal macro context where multilingual linguistic practices are accepted as normal and prevail in everyday encounters, as, for instance, in many African countries today.

Instances of the second kind of contact-linguistic outcome are cases of dialect change where an existing dialect acquires new features as a result of immigration, as has been the case, for instance, for the traditional Berlin dialect. Other instances we discussed are new majority language vernaculars that emerge in multiethnic urban neighbourhoods similar to the ones supporting Multilingual Mixed Languages. Unlike the latter, they do not integrate different languages alike, but rather stay within the realm of the language that has the status of a majority language in the broader society. The societal macro setting of such new vernaculars is typically characterised by a strong monolingual habitus and a correspondingly pronounced dominance of this majority language, which impedes the formation of fully-blown mixed languages. As we have seen for the example of German

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<sup>18</sup> From Maybachufer fieldnotes; German original, my translation [H. Wiese].



Kiezdeutsch, the contact-related variation and change we see in such dialects can be located on a continuum from contact-induced phenomena drawing on other-language patterns to contact-facilitated phenomena that reflect internal tendencies of the majority language.

The example of Multilingual Mixed Languages and such new majority language vernaculars highlighted the impact of the societal makro context on contact-linguistic outcomes. To emphasise the similarity of their speaker base in multiethnic urban neighbourhoods, I brought them together under the concept of “urban contact dialects.”

Interestingly, we saw that even under conditions of a societal monolingual bias, one can also find systematic language mixing. A pertinent example are multilingual mixed market jargons that emerge on urban markets with a linguistically highly diverse base of sellers and customers. As we saw for the example of two Berlin markets, such jargons can be described as integrative linguistic practices that access a broad range of spatially determined linguistic resources and allow individual ad-hoc solutions, however they do not follow some “anything goes” policy, but are guided by local customs of language choice and dominance and contain a core of recurring patterns.

Taken together, our exploration of cities as sites of language contact has shed a light on a number of threads that are interesting for contact-linguistic research, among them the status of urban contact dialects in multiethnic areas, the relationship of mixed languages and new urban vernaculars, the impact of a multilingual vs. monolingual societal habitus on contact-linguistic developments, and the emergence of multilingual market practices that seem to defy the strong dominance of a single majority language, at least at a local level within a spatially determined (and restricted) linguistic setting. For future research, it would be particularly interesting to further investigate such market practices from a contact-linguistic perspective, and also from a broader perspective of linguistic practices and language structure. If we embrace multilingualism as the normal condition of human language, it is in such settings, where the restrictions of codified monolingual norms are loosened, that we can expect a more natural language use, something we might think of as “free-range language”.

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